

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF TURKEY

BULLETIN No. 10

March 1974

Bulletin Editor

M. C. Harrison

Editorial Address

c/o RSPB
The Lodge Sandy
Bedfordshire
England



EDITORIAL

Unfortunately we have to tell of further delay in the publication of the 1970/71 Report. Although the majority of the report has been ready for printing for over a year, the editors have yet to receive the German section, edited by Gunther Muller, despite frequent requests. However we hope to have this in the near future and printing will go ahead as fast as possible.

The 1972/73 Report is now being prepared under the editorship of Mark Beaman, and we hope that this will be published towards the end of the year. So please send any outstanding records for those two years as soon as possible. An enlarged and updated edition of the Check List is planned for 1975.

As a preview to these coming publications, we have included in this bulletin some of the more interesting records from 1972/73, and some distribution maps prepared by Richard Porter as part of the Society's contribution to "The Birds of the Western Palearctic".

SOME 1972/73 RECORDS

- 2 -

Mike Harrison

We thought that members would be interested to hear of some of the more interesting records reported during the last two years. This is by no means a comprehensive list, and the records included are largely unchecked and should not be regarded as authenticated. Full details will of course appear in the 1972/73 Report.

The Menderes Delta has had its share of sightings with a Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) recorded on 1st February 1972, and 5 Whooper Swans (Cygnus cygnus) on 25th January 1972. 10 Whoopers were also seen at AkGöl, Silifke in late February 1972. Several small parties of Marbled Teal (Anas angustirostris) may have numbered up to 70 birds on the Goksu Delta on 29th April 1972, while 2 Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) were seen with Little Egrets (Egretta garzetta) on a nesting site in the same area on 1st May 1972. A Pygmy Cormorant (Phalacrocorax pygmaeus) was disturbed from a reed-bed below the citadel at Van on 20th August 1972, and three days later a duck Velvet Scoter (Melanitta fusca) was seen with a brood of 7 on a crater lake at Nemrut Dag, Van. This is the second proved breeding record for this species in Turkey, the first also at Nemrut Dag in 1967. A Bean Goose (Anser fabalis) occurred at Hotamis on 2nd January 1973.

Interesting wader records include a Great Snipe (Gallinago media) at a marsh near Alanya on 2nd May 1972. 4 Greater Sand Plovers (Charadrius leschenaultii) at Karatas lagoons on 9th March 1972 and 3 White-tailed Plovers (Vanellus leucurus) off the Eregli-Konya road on 10th August 1972.

A report on the Bosphorus migration in the Autumn of 1972 is included elsewhere in the bulletin, but raptors away from the Bosphorus included a Great Spotted Eagle (Aquila clanga) on the Menderes Delta on 23rd January 1972 and another at Silifke on 25th February 1972. Two probably Tawny Eagles (Aquila rapax) were seen near the eastern shore of Gez Golu on 3rd May 1972 and a Black Vulture (Aegypius monachus) occurred at Uskudar on 25th August 1972. A notable raptor passage was observed in the Euphrates Valley at Asvan, near Elazig during August 1972 including 1500 Honey Buzzards (Pernis apivorus) a White-tailed Eagle (Haliaeetus albicilla) and a Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis).

Among passerines, White-throated Robins (Irania gutturalis) figured prominently with at least 4 pairs on a hillside above Pamukkale on 16th March 1973, a male in a wadi near Bingol on 2nd June 1972 and another north of Burdur Golu on 9th May 1972 (all these records are at the western end of its range). 5 pairs of Graceful Warbler (Prinia gracilis) were seen on a marsh near Alanya with one pair carrying nesting material on 29th April 1972 and 2 Olive Tree Warblers (Hippolais olivetorum) occurred near Adana on 9th August 1972. Over 40 Mentetries Warblers (Sylvia mystacea) were recorded at Asvan, Elazig, in tamarisk scrub in August 1972. A Moustached Warbler (Acrocephalus melanopogon) was reported from Van on 3rd June 1972. Other June 1972 records included a party of 6 Snowfinches (Montifringilla nivalis) near Ischak Pasha on 6th June and a party of 7 Crimson-winged Finches (Rhodopechys sanguinea) at Ercek Golu on 4th. Four nests of the Desert Bullfinch (Pyrrhula phrrhula) were found near Birecek on 22nd April 1972.

Lastly a Red-tailed Shirke (Lanius isabellinus) was discovered at Burgaz Ada (Sea of Marmara) on 31st August 1972.

Please send in all 1972/73 records as soon as possible as preparation of the fourth report is now underway.

Submission of Records

We are now collecting any remaining records for the 1972/73 report and these should be sent to the Editors, Ornithological Society of Turkey, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, England.

Records should be listed under species (not please under localities) and using only one side of a sheet. Species should be listed in the order used in the "Check List of the Birds of Turkey" (i.e. that used by C. Vaurie in the "Birds of the Palearctic Fauna").

Example layout:

Sterna hirundo (J.D.R.V. - observers initials).

W. Anatolia 18th July, 1972. Colony of 20 pairs. APOLYONG GOLU.
(Region *)

* A map showing the boundaries of the geographical regions of Turkey can be found in the "Check List".

Early submission of records would be appreciated in order to speed up publication of the 1972/73 report.

A few copies of the 1968/69 Report are still available price £1. 60. (post free), also a few copies of the "Check List of the Birds of Turkey" price 60p. (post free) from the Treasurer, A. J. Vittery, 21, Frating Crescent, Woodford Green, Essex.

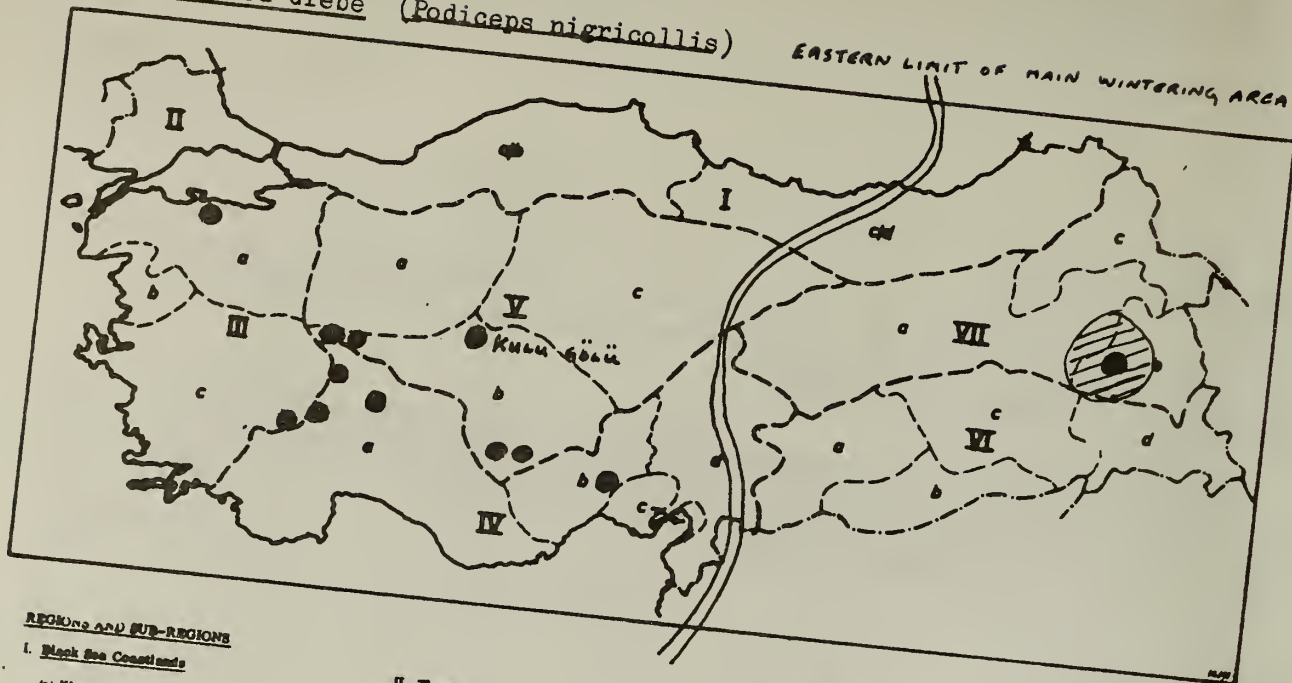
- oOo -

Distribution maps of the birds of Turkey.

The first volume of Birds of the Western Palearctic - a seven volume work which should be the standard reference book for ornithologists of the region for many years is to be published in 1975. The OST has been making all its records available to the editors and it may be interesting here to produce some of the species maps submitted for the first volume which covers Divers to Wild-fowl. These show that although we have now a lot of information there are still many gaps in our knowledge. The selection of 6 maps is purely a random one.

Black-necked Grebe (Podiceps nigricollis)

EASTERN LIMIT OF MAIN WINTERING AREA



REGIONS AND SUB-REGIONS

I. Black Sea Coastlands

- (a) Western Coastal
- (b) Western Inland
- (c) Eastern Coastal
- (d) Eastern Inland

II. Thrace

III. Western Anatolia

- (a) Marmara
- (b) Bergama
- (c) Izmir

IV. Southern Coastlands

- (a) Western Taurus
- (b) Main Taurus
- (c) Bayhan Lowland
- (d) Anti-Taurus

V. Central Plateau

- (a) Sgharyn
- (b) Eskişar Basin
- (c) Kizilirmak

VI. South Eastern Turkey

- (a) Middle Euphrates
- (b) Mesopotamian Plain
- (c) Upper Tigris
- (d) Harshish Alps

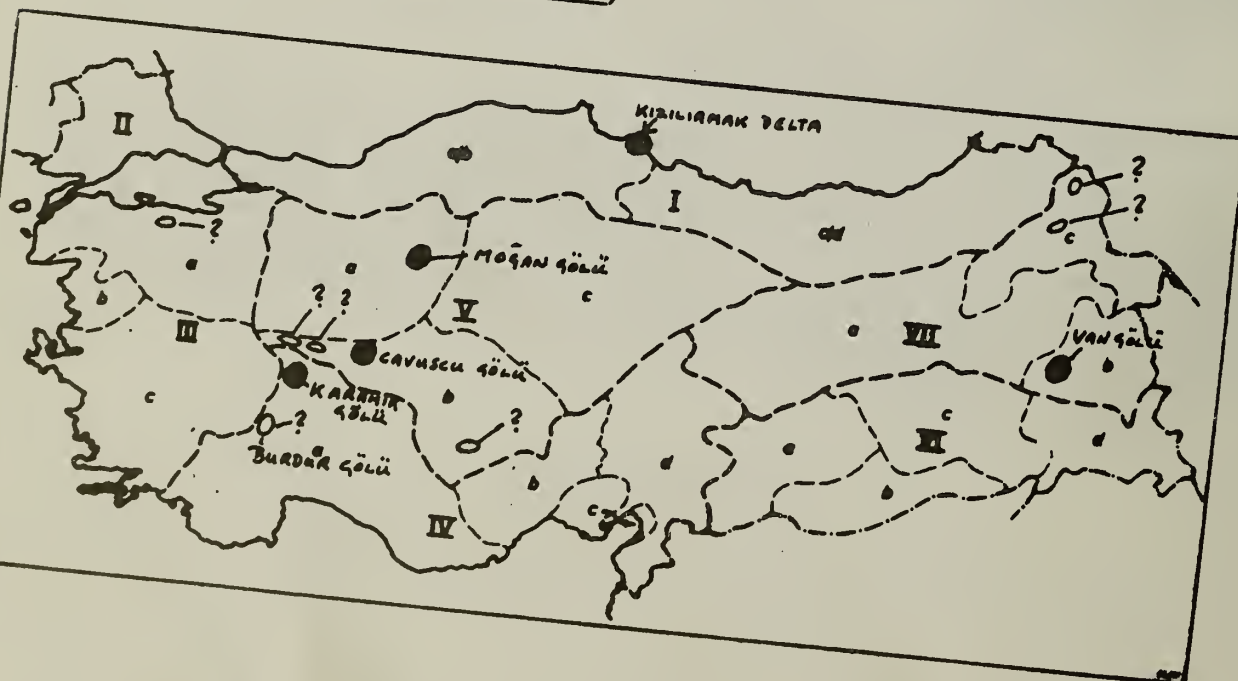
VII. Eastern Turkey

- (a) Upper Euphrates
- (b) Van
- (c) Upper Aras

Breeding proved in 12 lakes or wetlands from Manyas Golu in the west to Van Golu in the east, with the concentration in the southern parts of the Central Plateau and Northern edge of the Southern Coastlands. The most remarkable count was at Kulu Golu on the Central Plateau when 152 nests were found in July 1971.

In winter vast numbers occur in West and Central Turkey with a few at Van Golu. Counts made since 1967 indicate that the wintering population is in the order of 23 - 30,000 birds and at Burdur Golu, where the highest concentration always occurs, 18,000 were counted in December, 1970.

Red-necked Grebe (Podiceps grisegena)



Not common but widespread in breeding season though nesting proved from only five localities - Van in the East, Mogan Golu near Ankara, Cavuscu Golu, Karamik Golu in the Northern Southern Coastlands, and the Kilizirmak Delta. What is surprising is the fact there is only one recent winterring record that being 10 at Burdur Golu in January 1970.

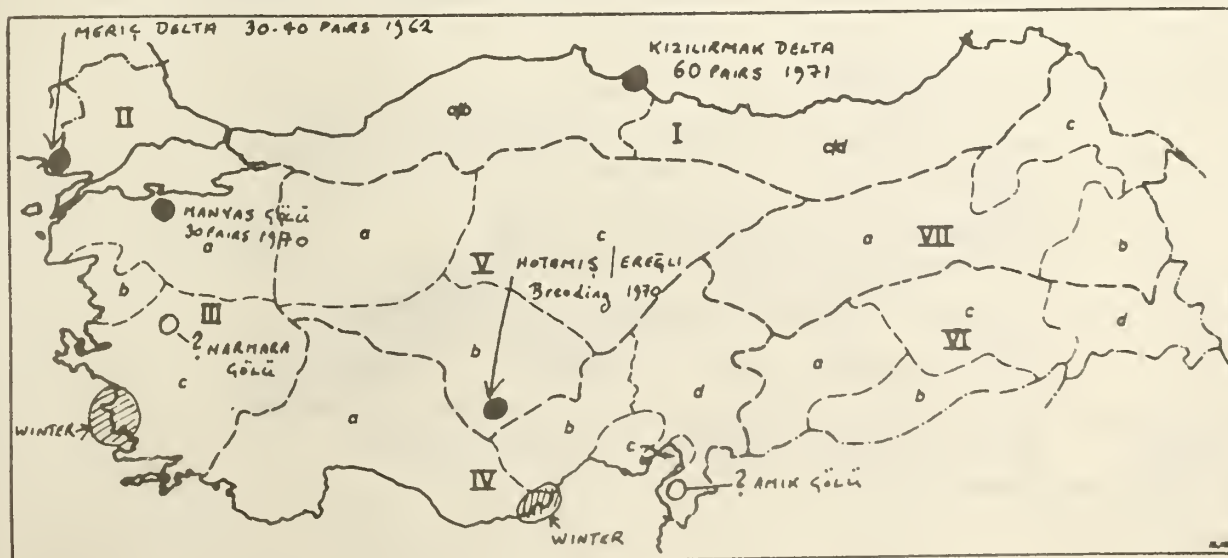
White Pelican (Pelecanus onocrotalus)



A passage migrant usually in flocks up to 800, though flocks of about 2000 are not infrequent from Western Turkey, but 10,000 at Lake Manyas at end of September 1972 was exceptional (an estimated 25% were immatures).

In recent years the only breeding records have been from near Van Golu in 1967 though one suspects that nesting there is regular as up to 1000 were recorded in the breeding season in 1967 and 1972. In 1969 and 1970 a colony of about 2000 pairs were discovered in the Eregli/Hotamis area at the southern Coastlands. Whether they still nest at Amik Golu near the Syrian border is not known but locks are regularly seen there in May and June. A few winter in the Menderes and Goksu Delta.

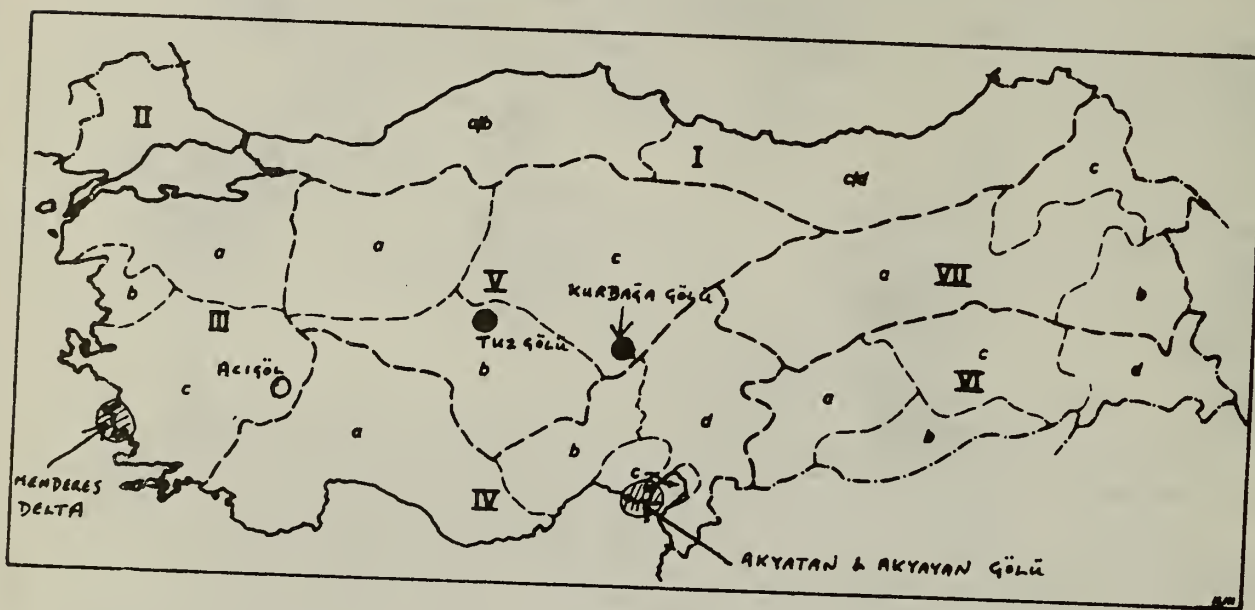
Dalmatian Pelican (Pelecanus crispus)



There are four small scattered colonies throughout Western and Central Turkey: the Meric Delta, Kizilirmak Delta, Manyas Golu and Eregli/Hotamis, supporting a population of some 100 pairs. Other colonies are suspected particularly from Western Turkey but none proved.

In winter concentrations occur at the Menderes Delta (up to 1000 in winter 1972) and Goksu Delta (up to 375 in Winter 1972).

Flamingo (Phoenicopterus ruber)



The first breeding of Flamingos was proved in Turkey in 1969 though suspected since 1967. There are now two established colonies on the Central Plateau supporting a minimum of 3,500 pairs, a third possible breeding lake is Acigol in Western Turkey.

Wintering occurs at the Menderes Delta (up to 6000) and Akyatan and Akyayan Golu on the Southern Coastlands (up to 19000) so these figures probably give a truer picture of the breeding population assuming that they are all Turkish birds.

Details of breeding and wintering are :

Tuz Golu

Breeding suspected in 1967. Proved in 1969 when at least 2000 pairs found (though 14,000 counted in May 1969)

Breeding also proved in 1972
In winter up to 1700 (Jan 1969)

Kurbaga Golu

Breeding first proved in 1970 when at least 1500 pairs

In November 1969, 18000 were counted

Akyatan & Akyayan Golu

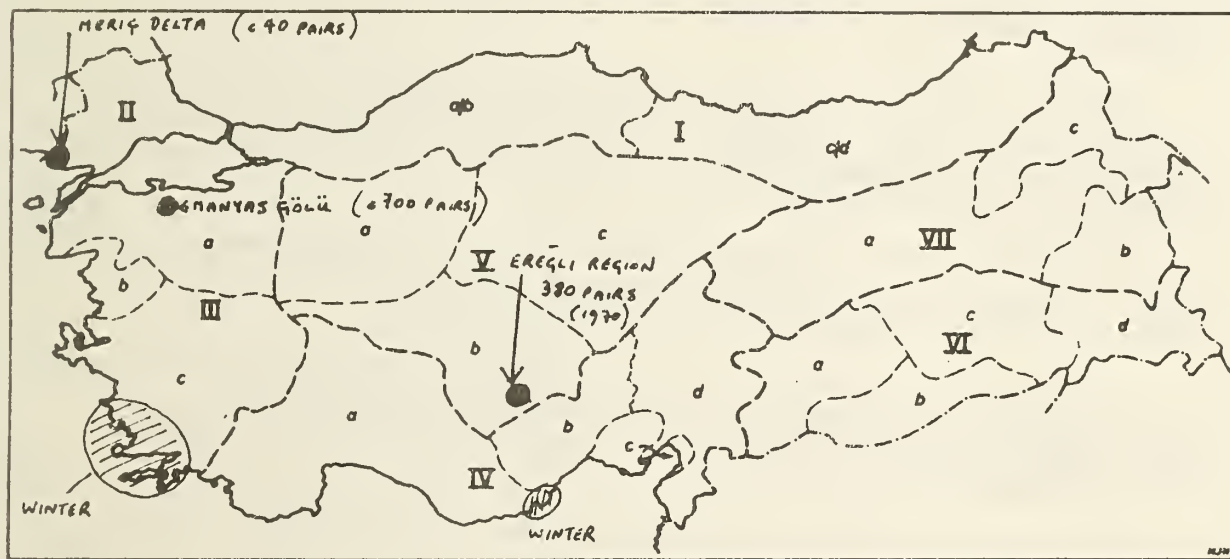
Main wintering area, probably of the Tuz and Kurbaga Golu population. Maximum count was 19000 in

(Southern Coastlands) January 1972.

Aci Golu Suspected breeding with at least 2000 present in summer months.

Menderes Delta Up to 6000 recorded in winter, probably the summering/breeding population from Acigol

Spoonbill (Platalea leucorodia)



Recent records from Europe, Asia and North Africa indicate that the Spoonbill is a seriously threatened species. Only last autumn some 80% of Spain's Cota Donana population were wiped out by an outbreak of the bacterial poison, botulism. In Turkey there are three colonies, the main one at Manyas Golu which was in the order of 700 pairs in 1968 the others are at Eregli where 70 pairs were found nesting in 1970 (further investigation in the neighbouring area produced a further 310 pairs), and at the Meric Delta about 40 pairs are still thought to nest. Small numbers winter at the Goksu Delta and Menderes Delta.



NUTHATCHES

In response to a letter from Prof. P. R. Grant of McGill University which was published in the last Bulletin we have received the following communication on re-occurrence of the Greater Rock Nuthatch (Sitta tephronota).

THE GREATER ROCK NUTHATCH (Sitta tephronota)

Breeding species in South Anatolia

"On March 22nd 1972, K. Bucher discovered two pairs of Rock Nuthatches in the highlands west of Gaziantep, both of them occupied in nestbuilding activities in close neighbourhood of each other. The two pairs, however, differed noticeably in size.

K. Bucher called in H. and I. Mueller-Reich, P. Streese and the two authors of this article, U.P. Streese and J. Eggers, who were then able to verify the observation and note the following details:

In a cave of a heavily eroded, south facing cliff, a pair of Greater Rock Nuthatches (Sitta tephronota) were building their nest, only about 50 meters bee-line away from the nest site of a couple of Rock Nuthatches (Sitta neumayer).

Each couple appeared unconcerned with the others presence. The Rock Nuthatch delivered its song from a ledge just above the nest of the Greater Rock Nuthatch.

The Greater Rock Nuthatch seemed to rob the Rock Nuthatches of nesting material but also visited, just as the Rock Nuthatches, puddles at the edge of the road some 50 meters further down to collect nesting material.

At the scene of observation, no identification books were available to help in classifying the two species. Instead, the following field marks of the Greater Rock Nuthatch were noted :

Larger, longer and more powerful bill with dark tip, broader black eye-stripe which extended further to its nape. Chestnut-brown flanks contrasting to the almost pale flanks of the Rock Nuthatch.

Voice of Greater Rock Nuthatch was deeper and richer. The Rock Nuthatch reacted excitedly to the play-back of the tape recording of its own voice, the Greater Rock Nuthatch showed less response. (Tape recordings by U.P. Streese).

No reaction, however, was shown by either species to the play-back of the voice of the other species.

During the adjoining trip through South Anatolia, only Rock Nuthatches could be heard, and for several times repeated play-back of the tape recordings, in what appeared suitably habitats, only led to responses by Sitta neumayer.

The "Check List of the birds of Turkey" (1971) and the so far published "Bird reports of the Ornithological Society of Turkey" do not mention the Greater Rock Nuthatch at all.

In contrast, Kumerloeve (1961), in addition to two more authors who thought its presence in the Soviet Armenian border area and in the area around Erzurum very likely, quotes the report of Tristram (1882) which originates in the area of Besni, i.e. about 100 km N.E. of the place of our observation.

We cannot add to the rather vague note in Kumerloeve, not even after reading Tristram's original report.

However, two of Tristram's remarks were of interest to us: first the fact that he discovered Rock Nuthatch and Greater Rock Nuthatch (which he called *Sitta syriaca*) in the immediate neighbourhood of each other ("I have shot a pair of each on the same rock at the same time") which is verified through our observation; second, that he couldn't discover a difference in the voices of the two species, which is clearly refuted by our experiences.

As a matter of fact, the voice seems to serve a major isolating function for the two species having the same habitat and range and only slightly different coloured plumage.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to Dr. G. Rheinwald, Bonn, W-Germany, for the help he gave us in obtaining literature on the subject, as to Mr. L. Alt, Hamburg, for his translation of this article."

References:

Kumerloeve, H. (1961): Zur Kenntnis der Avifauna Kleinasiens.
Bonner Zoolog. Beitr. 12, Sonderheft, p. 79

Tristram H. B. (1882): Ornithological Notes of a Journey through
Syria, Mesopotamia and Southern Armenia in 1881.
Ibis 6 : 402 - 419

Names and addresses of the authors :

Jens Eggers, 2000 Hamburg 39, Maria-Louisen-Str. 88, W-Germany

Uwe Peter Streese, 2359 Henstedt-Ulzburg 3, Kirschenweg 36, W-Germany

- oOo -

Company required!

The editor has received a note from a member who asks whether there is an OST member planning to revisit Turkey during 1974 who might be disposed to take an elderly person along with him. He hesitates to tackle the trip alone.

The person involved is :

Prof. Dr. B. Baur-Celio,
20 Unt Heslibachstrasse
Küsnacht CH 8700
Zürich
Switzerland.

BOSPHORUS MIGRATION, AUTUMN 1972.

Mark Beaman and Finn Jacobsen

The autumn migration at the Bosphorus was covered by several groups of British, Danish and Swedish observers between the 5th August and the 6th October.

Following the discovery in 1971, unfortunately rather late in the season, of the importance of the Princes Islands route for migrant White Storks (Ciconia ciconia) and Honey Buzzards (Pernis apivorus) (see Bull.8), observers visited Burgaz Ada as well as the Camlica Hills throughout the main passage of these species. The final totals of 315,000 White Storks and 25,000 Honey Buzzards, the former representing a 50% increase on previous seasons, consequently came as no surprise. Due to the prevalence of north-easterly winds in August and early September the great majority of large passages were recorded on Burgaz; the peak occurring on the 31st August with over 55,000 White Storks and 5,000 Honey Buzzards passing. One of the features of watching on the island was the frequent appearance of flocks of White Pelicans (Pelecanus onocrotalus) in company with the storks and on one occasion a Griffon Vulture (Gyps fulvus) was observed making painfully slow progress towards land - an unusual sight even on this kind of sea-watch!

Between the 20th and 23rd August observers visited the Bandirma area, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara, and Kavak in the Dardanelles. However, only a trickle of migrants were seen and, since previous observations in these areas have yielded equally little, there now seems to be little doubt that the Bosphorus/Princes Islands route monopolizes the movement of soaring birds through the region.

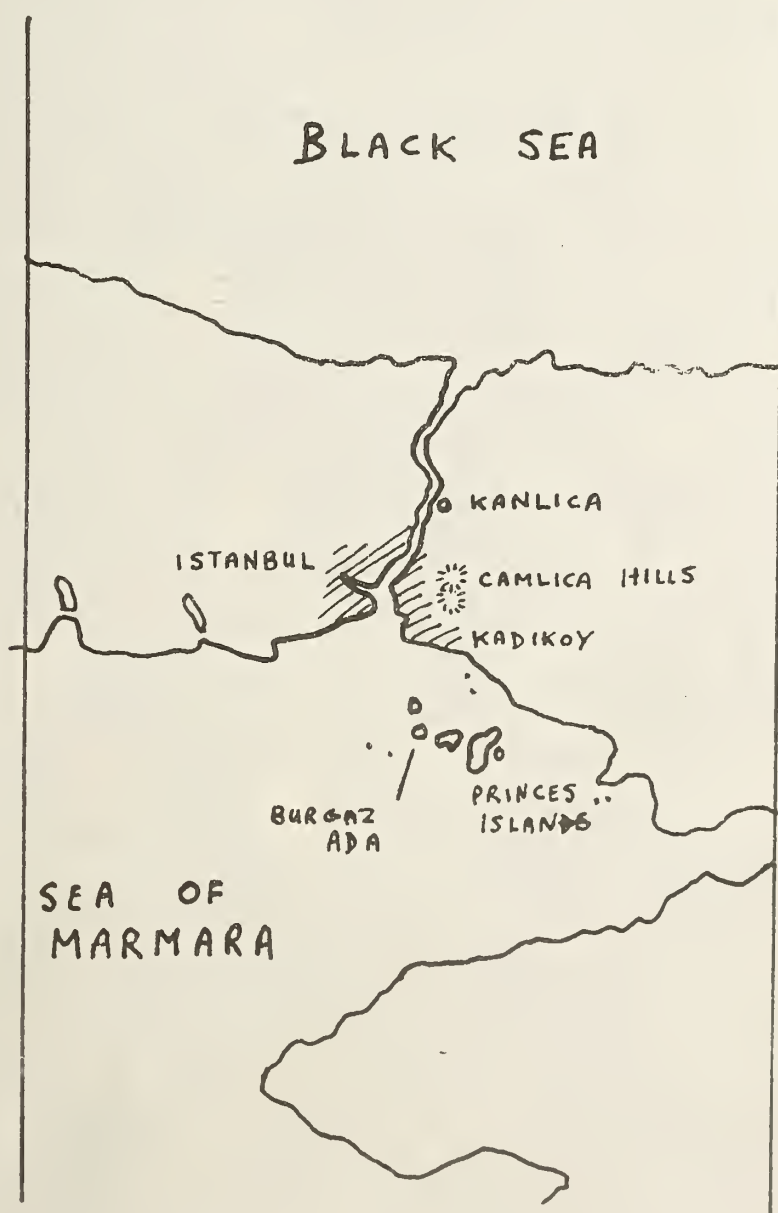
After the 9th September the degree of coverage at the Bosphorus was less satisfactory, with most observations being made from the Camlica Hills. Experience in 1971 showed that much of the movement of eagles, vultures and Buzzards (Buteo buteo) is well to the north of Camlica in calm weather or southerly winds. It may well be that the observed reduction in the numbers of these species (except the Buzzard, which occurs in very variable numbers), and others which pass principally in the latter part of September and early October, was a consequence of the untypical southerly winds which characterised this period. Observations at Kanlica and points further north were very irregular in 1972, unlike 1971 when observations were made simultaneously from at least two points.

Only 4,300 Black Storks (C.nigra), 1,400 Black Kites (Milvus migrans), 2,900 Levant Sparrowhawks (Accipiter brevipes), 12,000 Lesser Spotted Eagles (Aquila pomarina) and 1,100 Short-toed Eagles (Circaetus gallicus) were recorded (comparative figures for 1971 being 7,200, 2,600, 5,300, 18,000 and 2,500 respectively). Smaller numbers of Sparrowhawks (A. nisus), Booted Eagles (Hieraetus pennatus), Egyptian Vultures (Neophron percnopterus) and Griffon Vultures were also observed - yet again in much smaller numbers than in 1971. However, some 20,000 Buzzards passed (18,000 in 1971).

As always (or so it seems!) the peak passage of eagles and Buzzards occurred on the 22nd September - a spectacular movement involving 7,200 Lesser Spotted Eagles, 5,000 Buzzards and many other raptors. A further large passage of Buzzards occurred on the 30th September when over 6,400

were recorded. An unusual feature of this autumn was the large number of Red-footed Falcons (Falco vespertinus) recorded in late September - some 195 being seen in all (142 on the 25th). This species is normally very scarce at the Bosphorus, but not uncommon in Thrace and the rest of the Marmara region. The small flocks recorded on the 25th all arrived just in front of a storm front advancing from the west.

In Addition small numbers of 16 other species of raptor were recorded; including Ospreys (Pandion haliaetus), Red Kites (M.milvus), Goshawks (A.gentilis), Long-legged Buzzards (B. rufinus), Imperial Eagles (A.pomarina), Spotted Eagles (A. clanga), Pallid Harriers (Circus macrourus), Montagu's Harrier (C.pygargus), Marsh Harriers (C.aeruginosus), a Black Vulture (Aegyptius monachus), Sakers (F.cherrug), Eleonora's Falcons (F.eleonorae), a Merlin (F.columbarius), Lesser Kestrels (F.naumanni) and Kestrels (F.tinnunculus). Yet again Hobbies (F.subbuteo) of local origin confused the picture for that species.



Articles for the Bulletin

The editor would like to thank the contributors to this bulletin and encourage anyone active in Turkey this spring to write an article for the summer edition. We would be particularly interested in any observations of the spring migration on the Bosphorus, and any area studies of breeding populations.

Mike Harrison .

Illustrations by Ian Willis :	Page 1	Eagle Owl in winter
	Page 7	Spoonbills